

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 15 are amended to more clearly distinguish the applicant's invention over known prior art by adding the limitation that each caisson is fluidly coupled to only one watertight compartment. This invention eliminates the need for isolation valves to control ballast flow to or from the varying ballasting compartments, and the added limitations more accurately reflect the structure of the invention.

Claims 1 and 2 are amended to more correctly defined the relationship between the plurality of watertight compartments and the plurality of caissons. The amendments change each compartment from being coupled to a unique one of said plurality of caissons to being coupled to a distinct one of said plurality of caissons.

Claims 7, 9, and 12 are amended to more clearly distinguish the applicant's invention over known prior art by adding the limitation that the caisson is in non-isolatable communication with the watertight compartment. This added limitation more accurately reflects the valve-less structure of the ballasting system according to the invention.

In the specification and claims, reference numeral 52 refers to both the housing caissons and void compartments. The drawings, however, only use reference numeral 52 to refer to the housing caissons. Therefore, claim 6 and the specification are amended to remove reference numeral 52.

Allowance of claims 1-16 and passage to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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